health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Bath	
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology	
Mode of delivery	Full time	
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist	
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist	
Date of visit	21 - 22 September 2010	

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Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approves educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Practitioner psychologist' or 'Clinical psychologist' must be registered with us. The HPC keeps a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 9 December 2010. At the Committee meeting on 16 February 2011, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HPC approval for the first time. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event as the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The professional body and the HPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Laura Golding (Clinical Psychologist) Stephen Davies (Clinical Psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	14
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2011
Chair	Nick Gould (University of Bath)
Secretary	Lesley Anderson (University of Bath)
Members of the joint panel	Andrew Cuthbertson (British Psychological Society)
	Malcolm Adams (British Psychological Society)
	Alana Tooze (British Psychological Society)
	Lucy Kerry (British Psychological Society)

Visit details

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	\bowtie		
Descriptions of the modules		\bowtie	
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	\boxtimes		
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	\boxtimes		
Practice placement handbook	\square		
Student handbook	\bowtie		
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	\square		
External examiners' reports from the last two years			

The HPC did not review the descriptions of modules prior to the visit as the education provider did not submit it.

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new.

During the visit the HPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	\boxtimes		
Programme team	\bowtie		
Placements providers and educators/mentors	\square		
Students	\square		
Learning resources	\square		
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	\square		

The HPC met with Psychology PhD students and students from the MSc Health Psychology as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 38 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 19 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

2.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the web based programme documentation and any advertising material to ensure that the criteria used for selecting students at interview will be available to applicants.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation submitted by the education provider that there was no reference to or mention of the specific criteria which will be used by the programme team to select candidates at interview. The visitors articulated that this could mean applicants may not have all of the information they require to make an informed decision about applying to the programme. During discussions with the programme team it was clarified that the intention was to make the criteria available to applicants via the education provider's website well in advance of being invited to interview. The visitors therefore require evidence of what will be provided to applicants via the website, or by other means, which articulates the criteria for selection at interview. This is to provide clarity for those applying to the programme and to ensure that this standard can be met.

2.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and any advertising material to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider did not comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. In particular, there were instances of out-of-date terminology in reference to HPC 'accrediting' the programme. The HPC does not 'accredit' education programmes we 'approve' education programmes. The visitors considered this out of date terminology to be inaccurate and potentially misleading to applicants and students and therefore required the documentation to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect or out-of-date terminology throughout. This is to provide clarity for those on or applying to the programme and to ensure that this standard can be met.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the programme ensures that students who successfully complete the programme can meet every standard of proficiency for practitioner psychologists.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the curriculum will describe learning outcomes that will ensure those who successfully complete the programme meet every standard of proficiency for their part of the Register. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as module descriptors, to articulate how the curriculum will be structured to deliver learning outcomes that will allow students to meet every standard of proficiency for practitioner psychologists. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will be eligible to apply to the Register and that this standard can be met.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Condition: The education provider must articulate how the curriculum reflects the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine if the programme's teaching and learning strategy is reflective of relevant curriculum guidance. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as a teaching and learning strategy and module descriptors, to articulate how the learning outcomes reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will be eligible to apply to the Register and that this standard is met.

4.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the curriculum ensures that the elements of professional practice are fully integrated with the theoretical basis of the programme's teaching and learning strategy.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the programme's teaching and learning strategy will ensure that the key aspects of theory and professional practice will be integrated within the curriculum. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as a teaching and learning strategy and module descriptors, to articulate how learning

outcomes will provide students with the necessary balance of theory and practice. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will be able to work safely as a clinical psychologist and that this standard can be met.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Condition: The education provider must articulate how the curriculum will react to changes in the professional environment to ensure that it remains relevant to current practice.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the programme's teaching and learning practices will allow for changes in the philosophy, core values, skill and knowledge in clinical psychology. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as module descriptors, to articulate how the curriculum reflects relevant curriculum guidance and will be able react to changes in the profession. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will be able to work safely as a clinical psychologist with a good understanding of the professional environment into which they may enter.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the curriculum includes sufficient information about, and or references to, the HPC's standards of conduct performance and ethics.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine if there were any explicit references to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics or if the HPC's Guidance on conduct and ethics for students appears in module reading lists. The visitors articulated that students should be aware of the implications of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics on them as students and on them as professionals in the future. The visitors therefore require evidence to demonstrate that the programme documentation includes sufficient information about and or references to the HPC's standards of conduct performance and ethics. This is to demonstrate that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and that the programme can meet this standard.

4.6 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the curriculum supports and encourages students to develop skills in autonomous and reflective thinking.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the teaching and learning strategy supports and encourages students to develop the skills of autonomous and reflective thinking. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as module descriptors, to articulate how the curriculum will support students in developing these skills to ensure that the programme can meet this standard.

4.7 The delivery of the programme must encourage evidence based practice.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the curriculum encourages students to use evidence based practice through student-centred and independent learning teaching strategies.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the teaching and learning strategy supports and encourages students to utilise evidence based practice. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as module descriptors and/or teaching and learning strategy, to articulate how the curriculum will support students to develop and utilise these skills. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will be able to practice will be able to practice safely and effectively as a clinical psychologist.

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the range of teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine if the teaching approaches used were appropriate to meet the learning outcomes, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and the practical skills needed in professional practice. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as module descriptors and/or teaching and learning strategy, to articulate how the curriculum will be structured to deliver learning outcomes that will allow students to meet every standard of proficiency for practitioner psychologists. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will be eligible to apply to the register and that this standard can be met.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Condition: The education provider must articulate how the learning outcomes of the programme ensure that standard of proficiency (SOP) 1b is met.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to the visit, particularly in the SETs mapping document, that there was to be no interprofessional learning while on the programme. The visitors also noted that there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be assessed. This was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery and assessment was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the programme will enable students to learn about working in partnerships with other professionals; contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-professional team; or communicate effectively with service users. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as module descriptors and/or teaching and learning strategy, to articulate how the curriculum will be structured to deliver learning outcomes. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme can meet all of the relevant SOPs for their part of the Register.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes are assessed to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will meet every standard of proficiency for practitioner psychologists.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be assessed. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery and assessment was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how provision will be made to adequately assess the necessary learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as an assessment strategy and module descriptors, to articulate how learning outcomes will be assessed to ensure that students to meet every standard of proficiency for practitioner psychologists. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will be eligible to apply to the register and that this standard can be met.

6.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.

Condition: The education provider must articulate how the programme's assessment strategy provides a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine if the assessment of programme's learning outcomes will be at the doctoral level and if the assessment strategy can demonstrate compliance with relevant external frameworks. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as an assessment strategy and module descriptors, to articulate how learning outcomes will be assessed at the appropriate level and reflect the requirements of use the word relevant here to external reference frameworks such as QAA subject benchmark statements. This is to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme have met the relevant learning outcomes and subsequently all of the SOPs for practitioner psychologists.

6.3 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must articulate how the assessment strategy ensures that aspects of professional practice are integral to the successful completion of the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the programme's assessment strategy will ensure that the key aspects of professional practice are a necessary requirement for the successful completion of the programme. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as an assessment strategy and module descriptors, to articulate how learning outcomes will be assessed. This is to ensure that successful students can meet both the professional and academic requirements required of a clinical psychologist and that this standard can be met.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must articulate how the learning outcomes are assessed to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme will meet every standard of proficiency for practitioner psychologists.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be assessed. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery and assessment was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the learning outcomes of the programme are assessed. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as an assessment strategy and module descriptors, to articulate how the programme's learning outcomes will be assessed and why the assessment methodology has been chosen. This is to ensure that students will be subject to appropriate assessment and that those who successfully complete the programme will be able to practise safely and effectively.

6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the assessment strategy ensures that students who successfully complete the programme are fit to practise.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the assessment of the programme's learning outcomes ensures that those students who successfully complete the programme are fit to practice. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as an assessment strategy and module descriptors, to articulate how the students' performance will be assessed and that this assessment will be objective and ensure that they are fit to practice. This is to ensure that students will be subject to appropriate assessment and that those who successfully complete the programme will be able to practise safely and effectively.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must re-visit the programme documentation to clearly articulate how students are to be assessed to ensure that they can continue through the programme as intended.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation provided prior to, and at, the visit there was no detailed description of the curriculum or how the

teaching and learning was to be delivered. This omission was clarified during discussions with the programme team when it was highlighted that the work to articulate the detail of the curriculum delivery was to be undertaken prior to final validation by the education provider. As a consequence the visitors could not determine how the assessment regulations would be articulated to students so that they can understand what is required of them at each stage of the programme. The visitors articulated that if the regulations were not sufficiently clear it could lead to students perceiving they had been treated differently in different situations. In turn this perception may lead to decisions made about their academic performance open to successful academic appeal and to students successfully completing the programme with concerns about their ability to meet all of the SOPs. The visitors therefore require detailed documentation, such as an assessment strategy and module descriptors to demonstrate how students will be expected to progress through the programme at each stage and how this will be clearly communicated. This is to ensure that students will be subject to appropriate assessment and that those who successfully complete the programme will be able to practise safely and effectively.

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that any exit awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the HPC Register.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that anyone achieving an exit award other than the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology would not be eligible to apply for registration with the HPC. However, in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail regarding the policy for the MPhil exit award from the programme. This could lead to the assumption that the MPhil award may allow students to apply to the Register for HPC registration when it does not. Therefore, visitors need to see evidence that the policy is clearly articulated and that any award of the MPhil would not confer eligibility to apply to the Register on any student, to ensure that this standard can be met.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the HPC Register.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that aegrotat awards will not be awarded to students on this programme. However in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail regarding the policy for aegrotat awards. This could lead to the assumption that the education provider regulations supersede the programme specific regulations and that an aegrotat award may be conferred. Therefore visitors need to see evidence that this policy is clearly communicated within the

programme documentation, so that it is clear that aegrotat awards would not enable students to be eligible to apply to the Register.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that external examiners appointed to the programme must be HPC registered unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the HPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. The visitors were happy with the external examiner arrangements after discussions with the programme team. However this standard requires that the assessment regulations of the programme must state that any external examiner appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered or that suitable alternative arrangements regarding the appointment of external examiner to the programme have been included in the documentation, specifically in the programme regulations, to ensure that this standard can be met.

Recommendations

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider including more detailed programme management information in the student handbook particularly about the line management arrangement for students.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation that there was a detailed description of the programme management structure and the committees which sat above this. Therefore the visitors were satisfied that this standard was met. However the visitors articulated that there was little or no mention of the mechanisms by which the students, as employees, would be managed while they were on the programme. It was also highlighted in the discussion with the practice placement educators that this line management structure was not clear. The visitors therefore suggest that detailed information about the line management of students is included in the student and/or clinical handbook. This could elevate any potential problems which may arise if students and practice placement providers are unclear as to whom they report to if issues with personal management occur.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider developing the monitoring mechanisms which will ensure that there are an appropriate number of appropriately registered educators to supervise in practice placement settings.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation and in discussion with the programme team that there are mechanisms in place which will ensure that the practice placements settings will be suitable for students and provide environments conducive to meeting the relevant learning outcomes. Therefore the visitors are satisfied that this standard is met. However the visitors suggest that the mechanism by which the programme team ensures that there are appropriate numbers of practice placement educators to supervise trainees should be kept under review. This would be to enable the team to strengthen the process used ,and to ensure that all students on the programme get as consistent a practice placement experience as possible.

Stephen Davies Laura Golding